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ABSTRACT

The educational system of Denmark is administered and controlled by the Ministry of Education through measures such as legislation, regulation of pay and working conditions for teachers, planning, and statistical and budgeting functions. The system comprises nine years of primary school, three years of secondary school, and additional training at universities and teachers' training institutes. Under the Public Schools Act of 1975, local districts may establish one year kindergarten classes which stress games and other developmental activities. On the secondary level, students are divided into college preparatory and pre-vocational specializations, each of which offers both compulsory and optional subjects. Students must obtain a public school leaving certificate and pass an entrance examination before being admitted to a university. Teacher training courses last from three to four years and offer practical training in the schools as well as academic study. Teachers frequently possess a doctorate as well as a teaching degree and spend approximately 40% of their working time doing research. Educational development from 1974-76 stressed expansion of higher education, cooperation between various types of schools, and increased tutorial and vocational guidance at all levels of the public education system. (Author/DB)

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Ministry of Education
Denmark

June 1977

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THE DANISH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM.

1. THE ADMINISTRATION, ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM.

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General Principles.

Under the Public (Free) Schools Act of the Danish Parliament dated June 26, 1975, everyone is entitled to free schooling from First through Tenth Grade (age 7 to 17). Nine years' compulsory schooling (primary school) is provided for, but school attendance as such is not compulsory. In addition, the pupil is entitled to attend an extra year's school in the Tenth Grade of the public school system.

Pupils who wish to extend their studies beyond primary school level may either apply to attend a higher qualifying course at a Sixth Form College (Gymnasium) or Higher Qualifying Exam. Course (HF) or a course of training for commercial life (10th to 12th year). In both cases tuition is free.

Higher education, beyond the 10th to 12th years of the school system, is offered at Universities, teachers' training colleges, Polytechnics, Colleges of Engineering etc. Tuition is free here as well.

Administration and control of the educational system.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for the bulk of educational activity in Denmark.

The Ministry of Education controls the educational system by means of a series of measures such as these:-

The laying down of regulations in the form of Notices in accordance with current Acts of Parliament and the issue of Circulars to subordinate authorities; the granting of funds annually to individual courses of training and educational institutions; the publication of directives, orders, instructions and advice; inspection and other means of control; and appointments to posts and approval of appointments.

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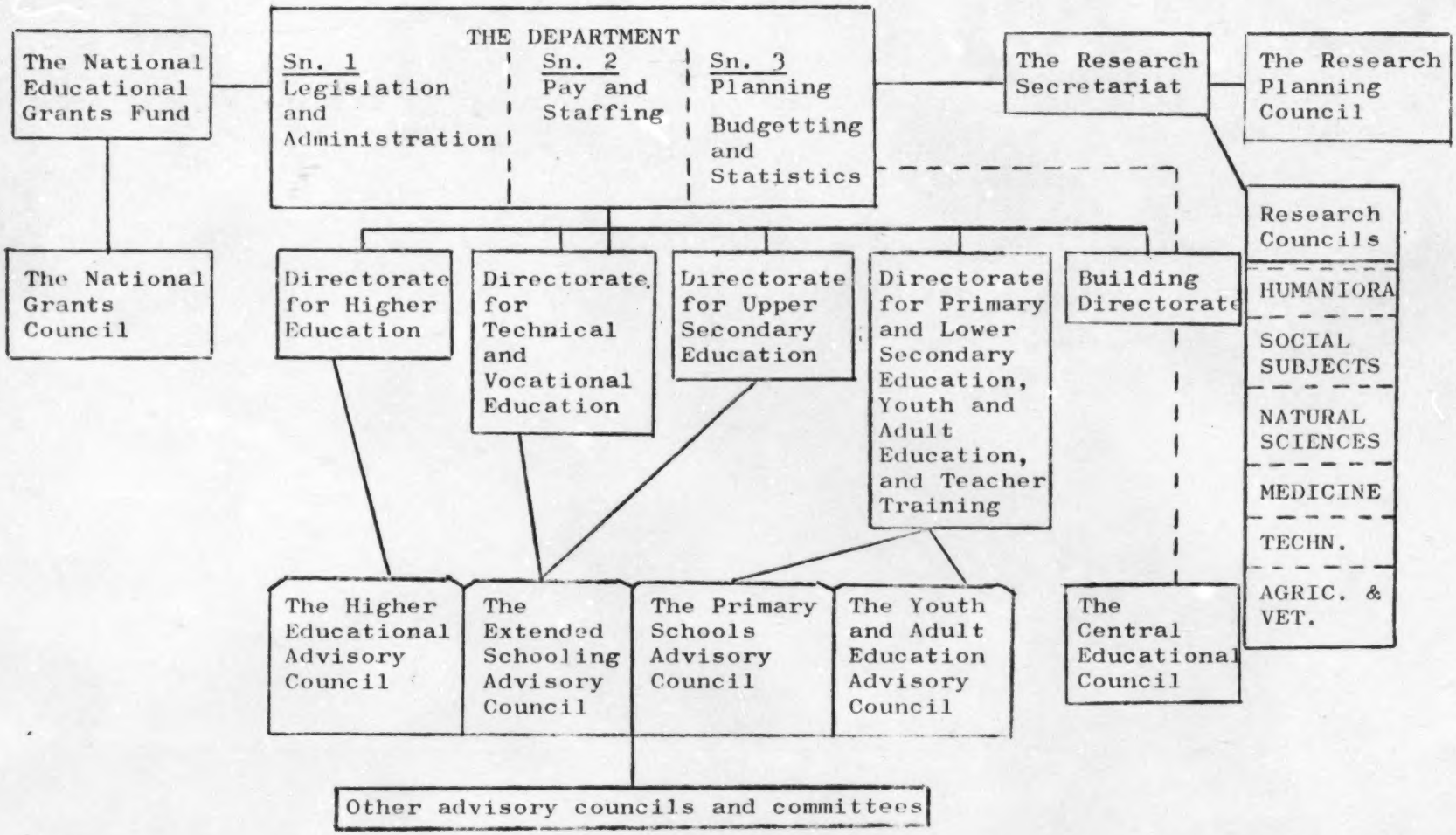
From an organisational point of view, the Ministry of Education is divided up into one Department with three Sections and five Directorates, as follows:


THE DEPARTMENT
Sn. 1 Legislation and Administration
Sn. 2 Pay and Staffing
Sn. 3 Planning
Budgetting and Statistics
The National Educational Grants Fund
The National Grants Council
The Research Secretariat
The Research Planning Council
Research Councils
HUMANIORA
SOCIAL SUBJECTS
NATURAL SCIENCES
MEDICINE
TECHN.
AGRIC. & VET.
Directorate for Higher Education
Directorate for Technical and Vocational Education
Directorate for Upper Secondary Education
Directorate for Primary and Lower Secondary Education, Youth and Adult Education, and Teacher Training
Building Directorate
The Higher Educational Advisory Council
The Extended Schooling Advisory Council
The Primary Schools Advisory Council
The Youth and Adult Education Advisory Council
The Central Educational Council
Other advisory councils and committees

The Department is responsible for the following co-ordinatory functions:

Section 1. Legislation and general administrative tasks, including The National Educational Grants Fund.

Section 2. Matters regarding pay and working conditions for teachers and other members of staff.

Section 3. Co-ordinatory planning, statistical and budgetting functions.

The Central Educational Council assists the Ministry with ad-

vice regarding the overall planning of the educational system. The Research Secretariat is the office of the Research Planning Council and of the six Research Councils as well as being responsible for questions of research politics.

Thus whilst The Department is structured to perform functions of a more co-ordinatory character, the Educational Directorates are designed to take responsibility for special sectors of the educational system, with the exception of the Directorate of Buildings, which is responsible for all building works relevant to this Ministry.

Within each of the fourteen County Council areas, a popularly elected County Council is responsible for the sectors of the educational system under their jurisdiction - primarily Sixth Form Colleges and Higher Qualifying Examination courses. In addition, the County Council is responsible for a series of inspection and authorisation powers vis-á-vis local education committees.

Local educational systems - and this primarily entails the public (free) school system - are under the governorship of the local elected council.

The entire cost of running the system, including funding from both State and local sources, for all educational activities in fiscal year 1975-76 amounted to some D.Kr. 15½ thousand million (£1.6 thousand million; $ 2½ billion). Public expenditure in all amounted to some D.Kr. 106 thousand million (£11 thousand million; $ 17 billion).

The structure and organisation of the educational system.

Under the Public Schools Act of June 26, 1975, individual local councils MAY establish one-year kindergarten (infants' school) classes, but are not obliged to do so. These classes keep six-year-olds occupied in games and other developmental activities whilst at the same time efforts are made to introduce them to the daily life of the school.

In addition to the one-year kindergarten (infants') class mentioned above, the primary school system (Folkeskolen) comprises a nine-year basic school system (First through Ninth Grade) and a 10th Grade of one year's duration. The primary school system is a comprehensive school in which pupils are

in principle kept together in their original classes throughout their time at school. This principle is reflected in a series of regulations in the Public Schools Act mentioned above. The relevant legislation can be summed up as follows:-

1) Pupils in a class may not be divided up or selected out on the basis of their abilities or grades.
2) Each individual pupil is to be taught in the class which corresponds to his or her "school age", i.e. the number of years during which the pupil has attended school.
3) Individual forms (individual years) are taught separately.
4) Efforts must be made to retain the class formation established in the First Grade throughout subsequent classes.
5) Finally, individual classes will normally be taught separately with the participation of all pupils.

At the conclusion of the ninth year at school, pupils may enter for a qualifying certificate examination in a series of subjects. Grades are awarded at this examination, but no particular grade is required for a Pass. At the conclusion of the tenth year of schooling it is possible to enter for an extended terminal examination (advanced school leaving certificate).

In the tenth, eleventh and twelfth years of schooling the educational system can be divided up into pre-higher educational and pre-vocational training courses.

In order to be admitted to the three-year Sixth Form College (Gymnasium), the pupil must pass a series of admission criteria, including the advanced public school leaving certificate in various subjects. The aim of the Sixth Form Colleges is to provide a continued general education laying down the necessary foundation for a further education. The course of instruction is brought to a conclusion by an examination (Studentereksamen; the University entrance qualifying examination). The school comprises two sides in the pupil's first year: Languages and Mathematics.

On entering the second year, all pupils choose between a range of courses. On the Mathematics side they may select between:- a Mathematics + Physics course,
a Mathematics + Biology course, and
a Mathematics + Social Studies course.

On the Languages side they may select between:-

a Modern Languages course,
a Music + Languages course,
a Classics course, and
a Social Studies and Languages course.

At the final examinations the pupil is called upon to demonstrate that he or she has the degree of maturity and breadth of knowledge laid down in the Aims. The University entrance qualifying examination qualifies for entry to University and courses of higher education.

The Higher Qualifying Examination, or Higher Leaving Certificate (H.F.), represents an alternative route of entry to the courses of higher education. One of the aims of these Higher Qualifying courses is to provide people who may have been employed in commercial life or the public sector for some years with an opportunity of re-entering the educational system and, if desired, going on to a course of higher education. The course comprises a series of compulsory subjects and a certain number of optional subjects which the pupil may select between in accordance with his or her own wishes.

The pre-vocational training side of the 10th to 12th years of schooling also comprises the traditional apprenticeship training schemes. What characterises these courses is that prior to commencing a course of training an apprentice has to choose his course, since training is based on a contract between an apprentice and a Master Craftsman regarding training for a particular craft or a branch of it. These courses of training last some three or four years, teaching taking place alternatively in practice (on a firm's premises) and at school. The course of training culminates with an (apprenticeship) examination or Trade Test, at which the apprentice is called upon to demonstrate that he has mastered the necessary practical skills of his trade.

Parallel to apprenticeship, a system of Vocational Basic Training Courses has been established. What characterises this system is that it is divided up into a series of main vocational sectors (currently eight), within each of which courses are arranged with a common content but with a gradual degree of specialisation throughout the course of instruction. Within each sector the course commences with a common one-year basic training curriculum taught at the

school and supplemented where necessary with a stay at a place of employment. This portion of the training course comprises a basic orientation and introduction to the vocational sector. At the conclusion of the basic year, training is continued on the Part II course, which normally consists of alternation between practical work and the school, with the main emphasis laid on learning practical skills. The length of training depends on the course chosen, but only in exceptional circumstances will the entire course - including the basic year - last more than four years. Efforts are also being made to ensure that it is possible to leave the course with a qualification of some sort at various stages during training.

In addition to vocational training within the field chosen, the Vocational Basic Training Courses comprise rather more teaching in normal school subjects than the apprenticeship training schemes mentioned above. One of the aims of the general teaching is to give the trainee some understanding of working life and the community in general.

The course does not normally end in an examination, but the trainee is assessed throughout the course.

In addition to the training courses discussed above, there is a wide range of courses open to those intending to enter the private sector of commercial life or the public administration. They are, of course, of different length and structure, but virtually all of them comprise some practical element. We might for example mention a series of technical and commercial training courses for e.g. technical assistants, industrial laboratory assistants, the diploma in commerce, hospital laboratory assistants, and various courses of training in the Civil Service.

As a next stage up, above the various courses of basic vocational training, is a range of courses intended to provide the student with competence to pursue further studies (e.g. for a degree in commerce) or with a final certificate at the conclusion of a short course, cf. below.

For many years, entrance to tertiary levels of training has in principle been free for students with Matriculation (Studentereksamen; the University entrance qualifying exam-

ination) and open to a more limited extent to those with the Higher Qualifying Certificate (H.F.) or a degree in commerce. In view of a prognosis that the numbers of people entering these courses of training would exceed the future need for people with such qualifications, it was decided (by The Ministry of Education) to lay down limits to the numbers of students to be admitted to the Universities and seats of higher education. Rules for the maximum numbers of entrants admitted to the various courses of training are laid down in the Higher Education (Limits on Admission) Act of June 10, 1976. Limits on admission will be administered in accordance with the following guidelines:-

1) Limitation to entry is applied on admission.
2) The main criterion of admission will be the grade(s) attained at final examination (Matriculation or H.F.).
3) Commercial, vocational or other experience will also be adopted as a criterion.
4) A certain number of students will be admitted on the basis of an individual assessment.

In addition to the above, the range of short-lasting courses of higher education is being extended. By this one means courses with a maximum duration of three years, characterized by close association with practical work throughout the course.

Curricula.

The public school system comprises compulsory subjects and optional subjects.

Among the compulsory subjects are the following:-

1st. form and 2nd. form:- Danish, arithmetic/mathematics, sport, Christian religious knowledge, and musical subjects.

3rd. form to 9th. form:- In addition to the compulsory subjects studied during the first two years:-
Biology, geography, English, physics-and-chemistry, and current affairs (from the 8th. form onwards).

Optional subjects available from the 1st. to the 8th. form comprise:- handicrafts, carpentry and domestic science.

9th. and 10th. forms:- German, Latin, typing and child care.

The Sixth Form Colleges (Gymnasiet):-

All according to the side chosen, the Sixth Form Colleges offer courses in Religious Knowledge, Danish (including Norwegian and Swedish), English, German, French, Latin, Greek, Classical Civilization, History, Geography, Biology with Physiology, Physics and Chemistry, Mathematics, Physical Education, and Music. Vocational guidance is also provided.

The Higher Qualifying Examination Courses (H.F.):-

Compulsory subjects include:- Danish, Christian Religious Knowledge, History, Biology, Geography, Mathematics, English OR German, Social Studies, Singing, Creative Art and Physical Education.

Optional subjects comprise:- French, Russian, Spanish, Physics, Chemistry and Additional Biology.

Trade training for apprentices and Vocational Basic Training Course trainees is determined by the trade chosen. General subjects taught include:- Arithmetic/Mathematics, foreign languages, and musical subjects.

N.B. The general teaching is to the greatest possible extent associated with the trade training portion of the course.

Teacher Training

The training of Primary School teachers takes place at teachers' training colleges (seminarier). Courses last some 3½ to 4 years and are structured to allow the student to take part in practical training in the schools. Applicants for places in teachers' training colleges have to have a University entrance qualifying examination or a Higher Qualifying certificate (H.F.).

Sixth Form College and Higher Qualifying Exam. course (H.F.) teachers are University graduates with a short post-graduate teacher training, whilst teachers at apprenticeship schools and Vocational Basic Training Courses have their trade training and a (short) teacher training.

At most institutes of tertiary education the teachers, in addition to their Master's degree, frequently also possess a Licentiate or Doctorate. In addition to their teaching duties, which occupy some 50% of their working time, they are generally also responsible for research, which will occupy some 40% of

their working time, the remaining 10% being devoted to administrative responsibilities.

2. DEVELOPMENTS BETWEEN 1974 AND 1976, AND CURRENT PLANS FOR REFORM.

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Within the Primary School sector an Act of Parliament (No. 313, of June 26, 1975) was enacted, one of the consequences of which was the introduction of nine years' compulsory comprehensive schooling. In addition, the new legislation widens the influence both parents and pupils have on the syllabus of the individual school at the same time as giving the local authority increased powers regarding the structure of the school, the number of hours spent on individual subjects, etc..

As far as the 10th. to 12th. years of schooling are concerned, a number of plans for reform have been developed on the basic philosophy that everyone should have the right to a genuine opportunity of an education lasting beyond the ninth year of the primary school system. An additional aim has been to co-ordinate the various courses of schooling available in such a way as to eliminate the sharp lines of difference between and isolation of the various types of schools, the education of the future being planned more as an integrated whole. Opportunities will have to be built into the system for pupils who wish to do so being able to transfer easily within the system during their training. Efforts must be made to construct the system in a series of graduated steps, with the ability to leave it with a certain form of vocational competence en route, although the right to leave must be combined with the right to return to further education at a later date to extend one's vocational competence (qualifications) if desired. Finally, courses of training ought to be devised which will be particularly attractive to that group of young persons who have not hitherto received any training beyond that provided by the public Primary School system.

We do not at the moment of writing know whether a common frame of reference for the relevant experimental work is going to be set up, but research will be set in train in the ensuing years in order to investigate one or more of the stated aims.

It ought at this point to be noted that the introduction and imminent extension of the Vocational Basic Training Scheme represents in itself a considerable measure of reform.

As far as higher education is concerned, The Higher Education Planning Commission published a report in 1974 on the overall planning of courses of higher education for the period from 1974 to 1987. The background to the report was the fact that a sharp increase could be expected in the intake to courses of higher education whilst at the same time no prospect was in sight of a corresponding increase in funding.

By the time the report was published it had also become clear that the prospects of employment for persons with long - term courses of training behind them were going to be decidedly gloomy for a long time to come.

The overall plan pointed out that no ideal solution to the problem was in sight but it indicated the elements which would have to be included if co-ordinated planning were to be achieved. These were:-

1) Central direction of the overall capacity for admission to long-term courses of higher education.
2) Consideration of the question of extending short-term courses of higher education as an alternative to longer ones.
3) Firmer control through the grants and funding system.
4) Commencement of the work of development of a current information service regarding opportunities for employment for highly qualified graduates.

The report set a comprehensive planning effort in train, and this is still in progress. The main elements in this effort may be summarised as follows:-

1) In 1977 and the immediately succeeding years an overall framework will be laid down for admissions to long-term courses of higher education totalling 20,000 students a year.
2) Opportunities for short-term courses of higher education will be extended simultaneously, providing everyone in possession of a qualifying examination certificate entry to a course of vocational training. These courses will also be extended for the benefit of applicants with other backgrounds.

3) From 1977 onwards, the maximum number of entrants admitted to all long-term courses of higher education will be laid down within an overall temporal framework.

4) Within the overall admissions framework, entry will be reduced to the Arts faculties of the Universities, Social Studies, Psychology and Sociological subjects, whilst the system will aim at extending entry to engineering courses and to courses in commercial economics and commercial languages.

5) Efforts will be made to distribute places equitably and uniformly between the two halves of the country East and West of the Great Belt.
In association with the central determination of the numbers of entrants permitted to the individual courses of higher education, the distribution of tasks between the various institutions will be gone into.

6) The Higher Educational Sector Council (Sektorrådet for de videregående uddannelser) is working on the establishment of opportunities for training in individual subjects at universities, seats of higher education etc. for a wider proportion of the population than hitherto.

7) An extension of tutorial and vocational guidance counselling at all stages of the educational system is being prepared, and closer contact is being established between the seats of learning and the labour market as part of the effort to counteract the increase in unemployment among graduates.

8) The introduction of further restrictions on university entrance will be laid down in accordance with specified guidelines, see above.
Current rules for restriction on entry will be revised with the aim of harmonising them.
Discussions will be taken up with the Parliamentary Educational Commission (Folketingets Undervisningsudvalg) with regard to the experimental introduction of methods of restriction of entry in accordance with other guidelines.

9) Plans will be worked out for the introduction of a co-ordinated applications procedure for all institutions of higher education.

10) The work of re-structuring courses of higher education and of making control over such courses more effective will continue, e.g. by registration of all students and via the budgetting system.

The short-term courses of higher education are being extended by means of adapting existing courses to the current situation and extending their capacity. This is partly being done by setting up a series of new courses aiming at occupational ends with a view to the long-term situation, and partly by combining existing courses with each other and by co-operation between various educational institutions.

As a result of the desire to open the universities and seats of higher learning in general to a wider section of the public, vacancies on existing courses have been opened on an experimental basis. The establishment of further and more far-reaching experiments is under consideration.

An important aspect of the work of planning is represented by the current preparations for expanding tutorial and vocational guidance at all stages in the educational system, not least at Sixth Form College level in the form of a better system than that operating at present, and at higher level.

As a final thing, contacts are being strengthened between the labour market and the educational institutions with an eye to the current unemployment situation and the more distant future, with the joint aims of creating new job opportunities for graduates and making training courses of more practical use. A special field within the higher educational sector which is worthy of note is the question of relations between research and teaching.

The extent of research has hitherto been partially determined by the grants available to the individual research institution. Increases in grants based on increases in the numbers of students have automatically expanded the various institutions' research opportunities.

An arrangement is under consideration whereby the extent of research is partially determined on the basis of the amount of teaching incumbent upon the individual institution

- thus maintaining the connection between teaching and research - and partially based on political decisions regarding research policy.

Adult education can also be expected to be extended in the coming years, particularly in view of the expansion which recent years have seen in the form of further education and preparation for examinations.

A number of experiments are currently under way in regard to new ways of working in adult education. Amongst other things the experiments are concerned with the use of the communications media and the concept of positively seeking out candidates for free-time (recreational) educational courses. The results of these experiments will be assessed in coming years from the point of view of the intention of establishing a permanent system.

A review of the relevant legislation.

The Primary (Free Public) Schooling Act of June 26, 1975 (No. 313).

The Sixth Form Colleges Act of June 7, 1958 (No. 165), as amended in Act No. 148 of May 8, 1968.

The Higher Qualifying Examination Act of June 8, 1966 (No. 236), as amended in Act No. 150 of May 8, 1968 and Act No. 340 of June 18, 1969.

The Apprentices (Conditions) Act of October 2, 1956 (No. 261).

The Vocational (Experimental) Training Act of June 7, 1972 (No. 291).

The Institutions of Higher Education (Control) Act of June 13, 1973 (No. 362).

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